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## Thousands fold sorrow, hope into paper cranes for victims of Sept. 11 attacks

KAREN GAUDETTE, Associated Press Writer

Saturday, November 3, 2001

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URL: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2001/11/03/national1455EST0576.DTL>

(11-03) 11:55 PST SAN FRANCISCO (AP) --

Well-wishers across the nation have folded thousands of brightly colored peace cranes as a gift to the people of New York and Washington.

For many, the origami birds have helped them express their hopes and sorrows in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

"It's just the feeling that I'm putting my heart and my spirit into the crane itself," explains Naomi Nakano-Matsumoto of San Jose. "Each one that I fold is a wish for peace or hope or good thoughts for this country and for the people who have suffered."

Nakano-Matsumoto has devoted her spare time over the past few weeks to stringing together up to 15,000 cranes being sent to her temple in Mountain View from other Buddhist temples in California, Colorado, Utah and Washington state.

Her temple has arranged with U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, to take the clusters to Washington, where he plans to present them to the New York and Virginia delegations.

The story of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who died of leukemia after the bombing of Hiroshima during WWII, helped inspire the tradition of folding cranes as a wish for peace.

Statues of Sadako in Japan and in Seattle often are draped in strands of cranes. More recently, cranes were folded in mourning of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Cranes, tall white and black birds with their long necks, legs and beaks, convey many meanings in Japanese and Chinese culture.

A paper crane's crisp creases wish good health to someone who is ill and celebrate long life at birthdays. They also are folded by friends and family for weddings because it is believed that cranes mate for life.

The richly hued paper birds are painstakingly arranged into elaborate displays that often are framed and kept in homes for a lifetime.

But it was Sadako's story that drew Sarah Nixon and her family to the idea of folding cranes to express their hopes.

While teaching others how to fold cranes in her community, the Medfield, Mass., mother of three came across the Web site of the Seattle-based World Peace Project for Children. After the organization posted her request for cranes on the Internet, thousands poured in from Ohio, North



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Carolina, Minnesota -- even Puerto Rico and New Zealand.

"I think there were so many people like myself and my family that were searching for some way to make sense of this and some way to think deeper about it in a nonviolent way," she said.

Nixon plans to haul three large duffel bags packed with 5,000 cranes each to New York City on Sunday on her way to the city's marathon.

The New York Public Library plans to display the cranes in the children's rooms of 82 of its branches.

"They are all shapes and sizes and colors. Some of them made out of Tootsie Pop wrappers, anything that's square, and it represents so much of what I think the United States is about -- all shapes and sizes and colors coming together," Nixon said.

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